

# BLAZE

THE SUNWAY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE



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# VICE-CHANCELLOR'S RESEARCH AWARD 2019

## Four Sunway University researchers were recognised at the Vice-Chancellor's Research Award Presentation Ceremony

Sunway University is in its pursuit of excellence in academia, and also through innovative research to become the country's international education hub with its nine research centres and one research group, where research across various fields of study is encouraged.

The Vice-Chancellor's Research Award aims to recognise exceptional performance from our Sunway academicians who demonstrate outstanding achievements in their field of research.



From left: Professor Peter Heard, Professor Saidur Rahman, Dr Ayaz Anwar, Associate Professor Dr Yong Min Hooi, Dr Hassanudin Mohd Thas Thaker and Professor Graeme Wilkinson

The recipient of the Special Research Award was Dr Yong Min Hooi, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, School of Science and Technology (SST). Her research focuses on ageing, specifically in executive function and social cognition in older adults. Her hard work earned the Long-Term Research Grant Scheme (LRGS) from the Ministry of Education Malaysia, amounting to RM2.5 million for five-year research on "Successful ageing: Evidence-based interventions to delay ageing-related decline".

This is the first single largest grant obtained in Sunway University's history. Dr Yong's project scheduled to be completed by November 2024, is categorised under the Ageing cluster within the Health research cluster and governed under the Sunway University's Research Ethics Committee (more on page 7).

Professor Saidur Rahman, Distinguished Research Professor and Head of Research Centre for Nano-Materials and Energy Technology, SST, was presented with the Award for Achievement in Research. His research focused on the area of emerging nano-materials, applications in harvesting

and storing of solar energy. He has been recognised as a highly cited researcher and listed as the top one percent of researchers for most cited documents in his research field of nanofluids for the last six years (2014-2019).

Senior Lecturers, Dr Ayaz Anwar, Department of Biological Sciences, SST and Dr Hassanudin Mohd Thas Thaker, Department of Economics and Finance, Sunway University Business School, were each honoured with the Award for Achievement in Research for Early Career Researcher.

Dr Ayaz Anwar's current research projects focus on nanomedicine and medicinal chemistry for the development of antimicrobial chemotherapy. His research on silver nanoparticles targeting brain-eating amoeba has gained international coverage and was featured in the New York Times.

Last but not least, Dr Hassanudin Mohd Thas Thaker's research focused on Islamic banking and finance, real estate finance, financial markets, derivatives, and economics, has been recognised internationally, earning him the Emerald Literati award in 2016. **B**

# GROWING WISER WITH THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Stories of the past, present and future  
by *Hailey Chung*

When Professor Graeme Wilkinson travelled to Langkawi from the UK for a holiday about 20 years ago, he had no idea the trip would eventually transform his life. "I thought to myself, 'This is a beautiful country with very friendly people. How come I didn't know much about it?'" Professor Graeme reflects.

Not long after that, he moved to a university that had a partnership with a Malaysian college and he soon found himself visiting Penang and Kuala Lumpur discussing course collaborations and was very impressed with the quality of education he observed.

It was not surprising therefore that a small advert he saw for the Vice-Chancellor position at Sunway University caught his attention some years later.

He recalls his feelings while pondering over whether to apply: "It was almost winter time, very cold and dark in the UK. The thought of potentially leading a university in a warm tropical country, and Malaysia in particular, was very appealing at that time."

He pondered a while but decided to go

for it. "The deadline was approaching, and I said to my wife 'I can just email my application to them'. But I soon found out at the last minute there was no email address on the advert!" Professor Graeme laughs at the old but gold story.

"My wife rushed to the post office to send my application by express postage. It was expensive and the special delivery cost about 60 pounds. Now she says, 'It's the best RM 300 I ever spent!'"

With a PhD in atmospheric physics from the University of Oxford, and having worked in some very old distinguished universities as well as very new ones in the UK, Professor Graeme felt he had the right background to manage a relatively new up and coming Malaysian university partnering with Lancaster University.

"Coming to Malaysia and to Sunway University was such a positive thing for me to do at that stage of my career."

## *The Gift of Today*

Since that fateful rush to the post office, Sunway has grown under Professor Graeme's leadership from a small regional university to one of the world's most

promising young institutions.

In his eight years at Sunway University as the third appointed Vice-Chancellor, he describes the growth of the university as fast-paced.

"We have always been breaking new barriers," Professor Graeme says. "Every year is better than the previous ones."

In the latest QS Asia University Rankings 2020, Sunway University is in the top 200, ranked 194, among 13,000 institutions in Asia. Doubly blessed, Sunway University is also ranked amongst the top universities in the world according to the QS World University Rankings.

"When I first came, we had only about two thousand students," Professor Graeme remembers, as Sunway University was just at its humble beginnings. "Now we have nearly eight thousand."

It has really been quite an incredible journey. Even among the young university pool, Sunway University is surprised by the fact that it has already reached the elite, looped into the top 150 universities in the world under 50 years old.

## 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

"It was an important year in that we did a lot of thinking about our future and planned strategies to move forward," Professor Graeme mentions. Some of the remarkable breakthroughs the Vice-Chancellor and team celebrated over the past year include:

## Sustainable Development Goals

The whole of Sunway City discouraged single-use plastic straws and bottles. Sunway University launched the Future Cities Research Institute (FCRI) in collaboration with Lancaster University, UK. Professor Graeme believes that, "It's a really important new institute and is looking at making cities more livable for the future."

## Student and Staff Body

Sunway University saw the biggest cohort ever of one thousand students graduating in the July 2019 convocation. Along the way, Sunway University also recruited more high-calibre staff, both Malaysians and non-Malaysians, and in its current demographic 15% of staff are from overseas.

"Academia is a global industry – the best universities have a mixture of expertise from different countries. Malaysia itself has many able people but imported talents are also an important factor in developing the institution," Professor Graeme states.



### **Advanced Infrastructure and Facilities**

The setting up of a cybersecurity intelligence lab to teach and train students in cybersecurity skills and the launch of the graphene and advanced 2D materials labs for key research in nano-materials have been key developments of the past year.

State-of-the-art facilities are constantly being introduced in line with the university's dream to become an outstanding institution for both education and research. Professor Graeme proudly admits that, "We have outstanding educators and researchers doing very clever work in discovering and disseminating knowledge, and they need the right facilities to do their best."

### **Major Research Grant**

The University received RM2.5 million worth of funding from the Malaysian Ministry of Education, for a research project on healthy ageing. It is the biggest research grant ever received in Sunway University's history.

"People in many countries are getting to live longer, so it's important to do research on how to keep people fit, fully engaged mentally, and as healthy as possible as long as possible," Professor Graeme explains on the project.

## Fast Forward

In competing with world's best institutions, some of which are several hundred years old, Sunway University is determined to make it to the top. "We want to be in the top 100 universities in Asia by 2025 and top 300 in the world — that is quite a big leap from where we are now."

The university is planning to expand and start new degrees, such as in engineering. "We are also hoping to start a medical school," Professor Graeme enthuses. "We have some medical-related programmes but not a full medical doctor training programme yet. And maybe we shall have a law school."

The University is now working on a new curriculum model to enable students to take a variety of subjects not only related to their core degree but also from other fields. "This will give them more interdisciplinary knowledge and enable them to be more well-rounded professionals."

The other big event on the horizon is the construction of a new campus building overlooking the Sunway South Quay lake, which is expected to be completed in three to four years. The new building will be mainly for the Business School and the School of Arts and will include a thousand-seat concert hall and art galleries and will engage the community more in the creative work of the University.



"We really want to engage with the community in arts and particularly with music," Professor Graeme explains. "We are launching a junior music conservatoire for young school children where they can gain musical experiences — such as playing together in orchestra groups, and we hope this will lead them ultimately to participate in music at degree level. The idea is to become a centre of excellence in music education in the country, which is something quite new for us."

## Becoming Harvard of the East

Professor Graeme's goals for the University are in many ways inspired by the ambitions of the founder of Sunway University, Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah AO, who wishes to make Sunway University the Harvard of the East.

The big challenge is that Harvard is nearly 400 years old, so there is a lot of ground to make up. But Professor Graeme says that they are on the journey. "We have come a long way, from nowhere to where we are today in less than 20 years, but given time and a consistent approach in doing the right things, we will get there."

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, but, "Tan Sri Dr Cheah has shortened a journey that may take 100 years into possibly 50 years."

To help make this dream come true, Tan Sri Dr Cheah has visited Harvard University, the University of Cambridge,

and the University of Oxford, and established partnerships between these international heavyweights and Sunway.

A year ago, Sunway Medical Centre (SunMed) and Sunway University signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the University of Cambridge and the Royal College of Physicians, London, to establish a series of Continuous Medical Education seminars delivered in Malaysia.

"These prestigious bodies are keen to work with us," Professor Graeme elaborates. "I think this suggests that we have got all the right elements, the right building blocks, and our commitment to excellence is very visible. I am quite sure we can create a great university in due course."

Just like Harvard, Sunway's focus is educational excellence not financial growth and gain.

"Tan Sri Dr Cheah has put all the education entities under the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation. So, if we make a surplus, we reinvest it in new resources to improve education and research. We are not in the business of making shareholders richer."

Professor Graeme and the entire staff at Sunway University are attracted to this education-focused ethos. "We are dedicated not to making money out of somebody but to improving society through education. This is what we are called to do."

## Leaving A Legacy

On a personal front, Professor Graeme hopes to help staff who want to build their career in academia — lending his own experiences to their professional growth. Raising the skills and abilities of academic staff is the goal of his new book, *"Getting Promoted In Academia"*, which he wrote to help aspiring academics reach their full potential.

"I was inspired to write it all down so that anybody else can learn from someone who has been through a long academic career and knows what are the right things to do, and in doing so, get noticed. Helping staff do their very best helps the university to achieve more," Professor Graeme explains.

He also encourages young people to read more. He says: "a book a week keeps your brain at its peak". Professor Graeme shares that it is the secret to keeping his brain

active even at his mature age.

"Reading news from social media is not equivalent to reading books. You are not just relying on little snippets that you picked up from Facebook or Twitter but some solid knowledge," he continues, "It is really about a whole subject. If it is a biography, for example, you get in-depth insight on someone who has become highly successful."

As Sunway prepares for its next phase of growth, core values such as the pursuit of excellence will continue to drive the next developments. And even two decades after his first encounter with Malaysia, this University's Vice-Chancellor is as committed as ever to the country and to making Sunway University one of the best in the world.



*By 2040, up to 49.5% of the Malaysian seniors will be dependent on the working-age group (15-64 years old).*

– Dr Yong Min Hooi

# SUNWAY ACADEMICS WIN RM2.5 MILLION

The first single largest research grant in Sunway University's history



From left: Dr Audrey Lim Wei Ling, Dr Yong Min Hooi and Dr Nur Ain Shahrier

**D**r Yong Min Hooi, Senior Lecturer from the Department of Psychology, School of Science and Technology, together with her team, secured a RM2.5 million worth of funding from the Long-Term Research Grant Scheme (LRGS), under the Malaysian Ministry of Education, to conduct their research programme titled "Successful ageing: Evidence-based interventions to delay ageing-related decline".

This five-year duration grant commenced in December 2019, scheduled to completion in November 2024, is categorised under the Aging cluster within the Health research cluster and governed under the Sunway University's Research Ethics Committee.

The research proposal has a great

influence on the nation. Malaysia is expected to be an ageing nation with longer lifespans and fewer births.

The project hopes to provide evidence-based insights on successful ageing, thus improving the overall quality of life.

Dr Yong revealed that recent studies showed promising cognitive and physical interventions to slow down ageing-related declines in quality of life. However, they lack strong ecological validity with no real-world application and unrealistic goals.

*"It has yet to show robust evidence that such interventions are stable and suitable in the long-term. Further, we are unaware of the cultural aspect of such interventions in an Asian population. So, running this project would help us to have a better*

*understanding," said Dr Yong.*

The research team involved Dr Yong as the Programme Leader, fellow Sunway University academics – Dr Audrey Lim, Senior Lecturer from the Department of Biological Sciences, School of Science and Technology and Dr Nur Ain Shahrier, Senior Lecturer from the Department of Economics and Finance, Sunway University Business School (SUBS).

Also, in the team are Associate Professor Alexandre Schaefer from Monash University Malaysia and Associate Professor Rozainee Khairudin from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). They are principal investigators of their respective projects including social cognition, biology, cost-benefit analysis, neuroscience, and decision-making. **B**

# SUNWAY UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES NEW BOOKS

## SUNWAY UNIVERSITY PRESS AND MTRF'S NEW BOOK GLANCES INTO MALAYSIA'S TAXATION SYSTEM

Sunway University Press (SUP) collaborated with the Malaysian Tax Research Foundation (MTRF) and launched a book entitled *Malaysia's Taxation System: Contemporary Practices, Issues and Future Direction*.

The book is a starting point for stakeholders to understand the intricacies of the Malaysian tax system. It provides insights into the history, legislation, and application of our taxation system.

"Taxes have been around for as long as time itself. Other than financing the expenditure of the country, taxes are needed to correct any economic inequality which may exist," said Datuk Mohd Nizom Sairi who read out the Chief Executive Officer (Tax Operations), Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia, Dato' Sri Dr Sabin Samitah's speech as he was unable to attend the launch.

"Nevertheless, the ever-changing nature of business models spurred by globalisation and digitalisation requires tax administrations to be robust in the face of these changes to protect the tax base of the country," he also said.



From left: Datuk Mohd Nizom Sairi, SM Thanneermalai, Professor Mohamed Ariff, Professor Yeah Kim Leng and Professor Peter Heard officiating the launch of *Malaysia's Taxation System: Contemporary Practices, Issues and Future Direction*

The editors of the book are Professor Yeah Kim Leng, Senior Fellow, Jeffrey Sachs Center on Sustainable Development at Sunway University, Deputy President of the Malaysian Economic Association, Trustee of MTRF and Member of Bank Negara's Monetary Policy Committee; and Professor Mohamed Ariff, Distinguished Professor and Head Department of Economics and Finance, Sunway University Business School. Each chapter was contributed by respected

minds in the tax, business, legal and accounting fields.

The launch was officiated by Datuk Mohd Nizom Sairi, Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Tax Operations), Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia; SM Thanneermalai, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Malaysian Tax Research Foundation; Professor Peter Heard, Provost, Sunway University; together with Professor Yeah and Professor Mohamed Ariff.

## BOOK RELEASE ON NEW POLITICS IN MALAYSIA

Dr Pauline Leong Pooi Yin, Associate Professor from the Department of Communication, School of Arts recently launched a book titled *Malaysian Politics in the New Media Age* that presents an overview of the Internet's impact on Malaysian politics.

"The use of social media is essential in today's world. It is important for politicians to reach out to the masses, to connect with the voters directly, especially the youths who are technology savvy," said Dr Leong.

The objective of this book is to attempt to understand and analyse the role and impact of media in facilitating political

change in Malaysia. It also looks at how the political process has been media-ised in Malaysia and examines the communication strategies as well as its impact on the voters. It also lays out Malaysia's political history and media environment and addresses the ramifications of media-isation for the political process, including political public relations, advertising, and online campaigns.

Dr Leong's work is original in that she dissects the story of social media and politics in Malaysia through the different lens of media literacy, public sphere in a digital age and e-campaigns. **B**



Dr Pauline Leong Pooi Yin (left) with Professor Donald William Bowyer, Dean of School of Arts



# #HARIMOU CAMPAIGN ROARS IN SUNWAY UNIVERSITY

"Malaysia's Stripes: Conservation or Extinction" is an art and photo exhibition promoting Malayan tiger conservation, hosted by #HariMOU and PERHILITAN (The Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia) in Sunway campus.

The three-day exhibition showcased tiger-related artwork and written pieces submitted by students, as well as items and materials provided by PERHILITAN, RIMAU, and WWF-MALAYSIA, to highlight the beauty of the Malayan tigers.

Visitors at the exhibition were especially excited to see actual tiger snares, confiscated wildlife items, and taxidermy tiger displayed at the PERHILITAN booth.

The theme "Their Stripes, Our Pride" spoke on the critical endangerment of the Malayan tiger and educated on the causes and effects of the possible extinction of the Malayan tiger.

Attendees left the event filled with emotions, passion and inspiration to do their parts for tiger conservation. Wai Jian, 20, a student at Sunway University, expressed, "I never really knew our Malayan tigers were on the brink of extinction until I heard about this campaign and attended the exhibition. It is mainly because no one ever speaks about them."



Presentation of a RM3,000 mock cheque to (from left) YBhg Dato' Abdul Kadir bin Abu Hashim from PERHILITAN's Tiger Conservation Fund, together with Professor Bradley Freeman, Professor Graeme Wilkinson, committee members and mascots

Various guests of honour attended the closing ceremony of the exhibition. Among those in attendance were Professor Graeme Wilkinson, Vice-Chancellor of Sunway University; Professor Donald William Bowyer, Dean of School of Arts; Professor Bradley Freeman, Head of Department of Communication, School of Arts; YBhg Dato' Abdul Kadir bin Abu Hashim, Director-General of PERHILITAN; Lara Arrifin, President of RIMAU; Dr Mark Rayan Darmaraj, Tiger Lead, WWF-MALAYSIA, and Charina Pria, Analyst of RIMBA.

At the ceremony, tiger conservation experts shared invaluable insights and

measures taken to save our endangered Malayan tigers when addressing the ongoing Malayan tiger crisis. There were also featured performances by poet Amelia Natasha and singer Cassandra Foo.

#HariMOU is a campaign conducted by a group of year-two Sunway University students, specialising in Public Relations and Corporate Communication, in BA (Hons) in Communication.

YBhg Dato' Abdul Kadir stated, "I was thrilled to find out that eight members are involved in organising this event. It is great to see passionate young people actively raising awareness about wildlife conservation and we should encourage more of that."

The roaring success of the #HariMOU campaign is not possible without the support of the public and NGOs. **B**



#HariMOU team with Dr Elizabeth Lee and PERHILITAN officer



Information and stories of the Malayan tiger were shared with visitors

**S**unway Education Group (SEG), Sunway Group, and Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) signed a public-private partnership agreement with 42 to open the first 42 Malaysia campus in Sunway City by May 2020.

Pioneering school – Ecole 42 is a revolutionary, tuition-free, and open-to-all, computer campus to train the best developers in the world in the fields of computer coding, digital, software and telecommunication.

The then Malaysia’s Minister of Communications and Multimedia (MCMC), YB Tuan Gobind Singh Deo congratulated SEG on the partnership, “I am very pleased with this latest development and I am sure it will be instrumental in building the necessary tech skills while lowering the cost of education in this field.”

SEG was represented at the partnership agreement by Chief Executive Officer, Dr Elizabeth Lee; Sunway iLabs’ Director Matt van Leeuwen; and 42 Director of International Development, Olivier Ducourant.

“42’s vision and non-profit status are aligned with the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation’s, especially because we give everyone an equal opportunity to learn,” said Dr Lee.



From left: Olivier Ducourant, 42 Director of International Development; Dr Elizabeth Lee and Matt van Leeuwen commemorating the signing of the partnership agreement to open the first 42 campus in Malaysia

## ECOLE 42 PARTNERSHIP WITH SUNWAY EDUCATION GROUP

According to Sunway iLabs (a non-profit incubator and accelerator) Director, Matt van Leeuwen, the Malaysian digital economy has grown faster than Malaysia’s overall GDP growth. However, an Economist’s Intelligence Unit study had identified Malaysia as one of the ten cities in Asia that is facing digital talent shortages.

“There isn’t a better time to establish 42 KL – it will build the talent to support

the country’s goal to be the preferred digital economy for investments and tech talent in the region,” he added.

The 42 campus in Malaysia will join the existing network consisting of 23 other partner campuses in the world – France, USA, Belgium, Morocco, Finland, Netherlands, Russia, Brazil, Indonesia, Armenia, Japan, Colombia, Spain, Canada, Italy, South Korea, Thailand, and Australia.

Sophie Viger, General Manager of the 42 Network, concluded, “Today, we are ready to tackle this challenge by duplicating the model that has met with worldwide success.” **B**

For any enquiries related to 42 KL, please contact Sunway iLabs: [miroshas@sunway.edu.my](mailto:miroshas@sunway.edu.my)

# SOA SEIZES OPPORTUNITY AT BARCELONA CONFERENCE



Azrain (left) receiving the Best Presenter Award



Padma (left) receiving the Best Presenter Award

With more than 200 presenters from around the world, Padma Pillai and Azrain Muhamad Arifin, academics from the School of Arts, were proud achievers of the Best Presenters Award at the 3rd International Conference on Education and E-Learning 2019 (ICEEL 2019) held in Barcelona.

Azrain co-authored with Dr Ann Rosnida Md Deni from Sunway University Academic Enhancement Division (AED) a paper entitled "Using Padlet for Project-based Learning in Documentary Filmmaking".

Azrain's presentation described a creative arts instructor's exploration with Padlet to support his students' documentary filmmaking project.

Padlet is a Web 2.0 tool used as a repository that stored resources related to classroom activities and students' work-in-progress. It is useful in facilitating

accessibility for teacher's input into students' project-based work.

Azrain did a semester of study two years ago through the Diploma in Performing Arts programme. "Data was then collected from the usage of Padlet between the lecturers and the students and had shown formative feedback and improved inclusivity," said Azrain.

Padma, on the other hand, wrote a paper on "The Impact of Perceived Lecturers' Self-Disclosure in Personal and Impersonal Facebook Account on Students' Emotional Engagement, Students - Lecturer Communication Satisfaction, and Academic Performance".

Padma expressed the benefits to leverage e-learning in higher education in the 21st century. She believed that lecturers need to embed new learning tools to build effective and enjoyable classes.

It is said that Facebook serves as a good platform for students-lecturers to connect. Padma stated, "I received comments from professors in other universities that Facebook is a needed tool in the education industry."

Along with that, Padma mentioned a chance of collaborating with other publishers as well.

Azrain is a lecturer in the Department of Film and Performing Arts and Padma is a Programme Leader and senior lecturer in the Department of Communication.

Two other staff who participated at the Barcelona Conference were Evelyn Wong Mei Ling, Department of Accounting and Dr Nasir Abdul Jalil, Department of Business Analytics, Sunway University Business School. **B**

# UNDERSTANDING MICRO-ORGANISMS TO IMPROVE LIVES



All smiles together with Professor Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam (right), MY-RGS Steering Committee Member and Chair, International Network for Government Science Advice Asia, as well as Professor of Genetics, Sunway University; and Professor Datuk Asma Ismail (second from left), President, Academy of Sciences Malaysia and Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia

**D**r Michelle Lee Chin, Senior Lecturer, from the Department of Psychology at Sunway University, won a RM250,000 research grant together with her research team, after competing in the Malaysian Research University Network-Young Researchers Grant Scheme (MY-RGS).

“We are excited about the grant because we are going to do something that is helping the public especially public hospitals,” said Dr Lee.

Dr Michelle Lee's team's project titled – “Infection Control Management through the Integration of Conventional Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance, Advance Biopsychosocial Assessment, and Machine Learning Approach” is scheduled to be carried out for two years starting from January 2020 to December 2021.

Primary investigator Dr Cindy Teh Shuan Ju, from

the Department of Medical Biotechnology, University of Malaya, leads the team comprised Dr Michelle Lee; Dr Unaizah Hanum Obaidellah, Department of Artificial Intelligence, University of Malaya; Dr Chong Chun Wie, School of Pharmacy, Monash University Malaysia; and Dr Azmiza Syazwani Jasni, Department of Medical Microbiology and Parasitology, Universiti Putra Malaysia.

MY-RGS provides financial assistance to research teams below the age of 40 from research universities in Malaysia. Matched with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), the research area includes food safety and security, water security, renewable energy, health and well-being, agriculture, and environment.

The team's research is under the health and well-being section, addressing the characteristics of micro-organism and human-acquire infection (HAI).

It is known that one out of 20 patients contract diseases from hospitals, hence the research will focus on characteristics of infectious micro-organisms and the human behavioural factors in facilitating infections.

In doing so, a prototype may be figured for the Malaysian government to use for infection control in hospitals.

“It is about healthy living and we want to have hospitals that make our health better and help improve people's lives,” said Dr Lee.

The research will be carried out at the University Malaya Medical Centre and Serdang Hospital, which are public hospitals with high numbers of patients. **B**



From left: Dr Azmiza Syazwani Jasni, Dr Unaizah Hanum Obaidellah, Dr Michelle Lee, Dr Cindy Teh and Dr Chong Chun Wie

# #SUSTHACK – THE HACKATHON APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**A**ssociate Professor Dr Lau Sian Lun, Associate Dean and Head of Department of Computing and Information Systems, School of Science and Technology received a project funding worth 32,000 € (approximately RM148,000) for the Finnish National Agency for Education Asia programme.

The two-year project titled “SustHack – Synchronizing Sustainable Development Actions Between Finland and Malaysia – The Hackathon Approach” is a collaboration between Sunway University and Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology (LUT) led by Professor Jari Porras from LUT and Dr Lau as co-investigator.

Dr Lau and the team had intended to include the experience of the hackathons into the curriculum for students to resolve real-life issues with the learned techniques from their classrooms.

“I believe Sunway University and its students could learn from our partner in Europe to encourage real-world problem-solving in appreciating the knowledge they acquired in class,” explained Dr Lau.

Funding has now been allocated for a small student team to travel to and fro Finland for two physical joint-hackathons and another two in Malaysia. This enables the cross-culture work to continue from the ideation stage to the generating of a solution prototyping.

With SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities as the theme, the hackathons emphasize the possibilities of IT in sustainable development, which helps align the existing Sunway University activities such as Sunway Make-It-Challenge.

The two years of co-creative journey with LUT will also extend the understanding of sustainability in the computing field, from local challenges to global challenges, for the benefit of a sustainable society. **B**



# SUNWAY STUDENT ATHLETES SHINE ON INTERNATIONAL ARENA

The 30th edition of the Southeast Asian Games, 2019 SEA Games, saw Malaysia coming home with 55 Gold, 58 Silver and 71 Bronze medals. Sunway University is proud to have our very own students; Lai Wen Li, Sin Li Jane, Siti Fatimah Binti Mohamed Abdulla Inamulla and Tan Ing Yueh, and alumni; Farah Ann Abdul Hadi, Julian Yee and Yeoh Li Tian, contributing to these numbers with 6 Gold, 2 Silver and 3 Bronze medals.

Lectures, assignments, exams and additional extra-curricular activities would have taken up a lot of a student's time. Yet, these student-athletes found ways to balance out both their studies and training as National athletes.

## When did you first start your sport?

**Ing Yueh** – I have been actively engaged in Gymnastics since 2003. I was 13 years old when I was chosen to be part of the National Team in Bukit Jalil. At the time, I considered giving up on the sport as I had to leave my hometown and my family to attend the Sport School. Luckily, my parents encouraged and convinced me to not give up on my dream.

**Siti Fatimah** – I started with playing touch rugby back in 2015. But it was not until 2018 when I actually started playing contact rugby. It was coach Nolan from Sunway University men's rugby team who encouraged me to enter the try-outs for the Selangor Women's Sevens Rugby team



Siti Fatimah (standing, third from left), Diploma in Business Administration – Bronze Medal in Rugby

leading to compete in SUKMA 2018. It was also at SUKMA where I was listed to be in the selection for the national squad and I made it after two months of selection camp.

## How do you feel being able to represent and win for Malaysia?

**Li Jane** – I am proud to represent Malaysia and have our national anthem played in other countries when I win. I am also proud to let people know that I am from Malaysia and make sure they know where it is when they ask.

**Siti Fatimah** – Being able to represent my country in my first ever SEA Games and bringing home a bronze medal was definitely a humbling experience. This opportunity only comes once in a lifetime, it truly was a privilege given and I am forever grateful and blessed.

## How do you cope with both studies and sports?

**Wen Li** – It is not an easy task to balance both. That being said, time management has always been the key to my successes as a student-athlete. The quality management by both the sports and relevant education departments of Sunway helped. The school provided the necessary arrangements, funding and facilities for me to further excel in my career and studies.

**Ing Yueh** – The commitment needed to balance both education and sports is the most difficult part. I am grateful that I am able to study at Sunway University as the lecturers were able to understand my intense training schedule and competition leave. Having lecturers who



Lai Wen Li (right), Canadian International Matriculation Programme – Gold Medal in Squash

understood my situation made my journey pleasant.

## What words of advice or encouragement do you have for fellow student-athletes?

**Li Jane** – Success is not an easy pathway. There will be ups and downs. No matter what, do not give up! If you want it, go for it. Enjoy the journey and appreciate the opportunity.

**Wen Li** – Always set a goal for ourselves and work smart to achieve it as nothing is impossible. Discipline is also the key to success. I wish you all, all the best in achieving your respective goals! **B**



Sin Li Jane, American Degree Transfer Programme – Bronze Medal in Bowling (Doubles Event) and Silver Medal in Bowling (Team of 4)



Tan Ing Yueh, Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Communication – Silver Medal in Vault and Bronze Medal in Qualification and All-Round Final

Find out more about Sunway Sports Team on <https://www.facebook.com/sunwaysports/> or contact Sports Office at [sports@sunway.edu.my](mailto:sports@sunway.edu.my)

Ten students from various programmes at Sunway University seized the opportunity and attended the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Summer School last year.

The following are some of their penned down thoughts regarding their breakthrough experiences.

For Alice Voong Shew Yin, she recalled the sense of inferiority at the beginning and how it slowly faded away, as she built her confidence to interact with different people.

“My first day of the LSE Summer School was intimidating. During self-introduction, I noticed my classmates were from prestigious universities such as Harvard, MIT, UC Berkeley, and HKU. Later, I found them approachable and humble despite their impressive backgrounds. I began to realise that everyone is equal and it is important to have confidence in our abilities,” said Voong.

Voong, who is studying the BSc (Hons) in Accounting and Finance at Sunway University, took the Competitive Strategy and Game Theory course while at LSE.

Chok Ka Lok, who is pursuing his BA (Hons) Entrepreneurship, found it interesting to have discussions with a large diversity of people from around the world.

“The teaching methods are similar to what is offered at Sunway University, except that there was consistent sharing of relevant cases for case studies,” explained Chok.

Chok also added what he gained from the discussions, “We found out that theories learned cannot always be applied to the real world because real-life examples sometimes proved otherwise.”

## NEW EXPERIENCES AT LSE SUMMER SCHOOL



From left: Ng Jian Long and Yeo Jie Wei with other Sunway Actuarial Studies students at LSE

Chok took a course in Business Strategy in International and Emerging Markets and stayed at Duchy House, a stone's throw away from LSE.

“The time in LSE opened my eyes to a new world and enabled me to view things from a different perspective. You hear different exciting stories and you learn to understand each other's beliefs,” said Khor Xin Wei from the BSc (Hons) in Actuarial Studies as she recounted her experience.

Khor chose the subject Introduction to Data Science and Machine Learning and found it extremely exciting.

“I had the most fun with the last topic on text analysis

where we learned how to extract data from websites and analyse tweets from influential people like Barack Obama and Elon Musk,” Khor shared.

Another student, Marie Augustine Lafontaine, from the BSc (Hons) Business Management, took Business Strategy in International and Emerging Markets.

She also loved the classroom diversity and how tutorials were arranged to prompt collaboration, discussion, and teamwork.

“The classrooms were not only diversified based on nationality but also their study backgrounds. This surely helps in terms of getting a diversified world view to

solve the different cases,” she explained.

Ng Jian Long was blown away on the practicality for the course he took.

“Referencing the course Introduction to Data Science and Machine, the lecturer demonstrated sample problems and codes, explained what each code does, and why he used it for that particular problem,” Ng said.

Ng has since completed his BSc (Hons) in Actuarial Studies and the LSE Summer School managed to prepare him to launch into his career.

“I honestly had a preference to work alone but the experience prepared me for the working environment by opening myself to work in groups,” said Ng.

Yeo Jie Wei, who has also since completed her BSc (Hons) in Actuarial Studies, liked the way classes were held in LSE because the teaching method provided more flexibility for students to learn independently and to expand their creativity.

“At LSE, the programme requires more self-learning to understand the subject well,” said Yeo.

Aside from classroom experiences, the summer school was also fun for the 10 students from Sunway University who would often gather for sightseeing trips and dinners. The group of students even went the extra mile to organise an extra outing to Brighton.

Based on the students' summer school testimonials, studies abroad and student exchange programmes are, no doubt, great opportunities for students to widen horizons in the academic and cultural aspects! **B**



From left: Chok Ka Lok, Marie Augustine and Khor Xin Wei (most right) with other Sunway students at Stonehenge



Photo courtesy of TC Lum

From left: Chef Frank Widmann, Jury President and Chair of IKA/Culinary Olympics 2020; Soon Pau Voon, Manager and Chief Coach, Malaysia National Youth Culinary Team; Amirul Ashraf, Tsen Jun Yan, Pang Jin Yong, Alicia Tay, Amanda Cheah and Ilya Dayana; with Chef Richard Beck, President of the German Chef's Association, *Verband der Köche Deutschlands e. V. (VKD)*

## MALAYSIA NATIONAL JUNIOR CULINARY TEAM TRIUMPHS ON THE WORLD STAGE

The Malaysia National Junior Culinary Team comprising Sunway University School of Hospitality students Alicia Tay, Pang Jin Yong, Amanda Cheah, Tsen Jun Yan and Amirul Ashraf, and Ilya Dayana from Kolej Yayasan Pahang, won a gold medal for the "Restaurant of the Nations" category and a silver medal for the "IKA Buffet" category at the *Internationale Kochkunst Ausstellung (IKA)/Culinary Olympics* on 14 to 19 February 2020.

Our national team clinched the medals with Malaysian cuisine, showcasing the best of Malaysian flavours with 'Rasa-Rasa Malaysia', or a taste of Malaysia for both categories. The team prepared a warm trout and seafood mousseline with 'laksa' sauce, lentil and trout fritters, and pickled salad with puffed tofu. The main course prepared was coriander and ginger-torch flower crusted chicken with tamarind sauce, five-spice roll, chicken ravioli, stuffed cabbage, squash puree and market vegetables. For dessert, the team presented chocolate mousse with honey madeleine, hazelnut cake, passion fruit - banana compote, yuzu sauce and whipped ganache.

The IKA/Culinary Olympics is the world's oldest and largest international culinary art exhibition. The event saw over

2,000 chefs from more than 60 nations participating in the culinary competitions. The IKA/Culinary Olympics is hosted by the German Chefs' Association, *Verband der Köche Deutschlands e.V. (VKD)*.

Team Captain, Alicia Tay said, "We are exceptionally grateful for the support from Sunway University, the many individual sponsors and corporate partners who have supported our hopes and dreams for Malaysia by sponsoring raw materials, utensils as well as donated funds to make the team's dream to compete in the prestigious competition a reality. Our win is a win for Malaysia!"

Sunway University's School of Hospitality teaching fellow Chef Soon Pau Voon who is also the Team Coach said, "Competing in the IKA/Culinary Olympics gives an opportunity for the young chefs to enhance their learning experience beyond the doors of their kitchen. We are proud to present our dishes which highlights the tapestry of flavours of our Malaysian cuisine." Sunway Education Group CEO Dr Elizabeth Lee said that the win was a coup for Malaysia's culinary scene.

The team was mentored and coached by Sunway University's School of Hospitality teaching fellows Chef Soon Pau Voon

(Team Coach), Chef Lee Han Ying, Chef Chong Wei Tzeh and its Head Chef and Teaching Fellow Professor Chef Patrick Siau, who led the Malaysia National Pastry team as the Coach to win first place at World Pastry Cup (*Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie*) held in Lyon last year.

In addition, Malaysia Professional Culinaire Association (PCA) Vice President Chef Pele Kuah, and Head Chef of Read Bean Bag Chef Muhd Fhaizal Mustafa, and Sunway University Alumni Chef Queeny Cheong also mentored the team towards the achievement.

A prelude to participating in the IKA/Culinary Olympics 2020, the team comprised of Tay, Pang, Cheah and Carmilya Aina from Kuala Lumpur Metropolitan University College represented the Youth Professional Culinaire Association (YPCA) Malaysia Culinary Team and won gold at the Shanghai International Young Chefs Cup (IYCC).

12 National and Regional Teams from Asia, Pacific, Africa, and America, were invited for the IYCC, part of the 2019 FHC China International Culinary Arts Competition, that had over 600 participants competing in more than 25 categories. **B**



# JEFFREY CHEAH DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS SERIES

## “Making News and Shaping Views; Riding the Rollercoaster of the Digital Revolution”

by Professor Suzanne Franks, the Head of Department of Journalism at the School of Arts and Social Sciences, City, University of London



Professor Franks spoke on the history of press printing and how media hierarchies managed the ways of disseminating news, where written information was so sacred that they were selected and accessible by a selected elite. Where readers and viewers are essentially a passive audience, the lecture also focused on how the revolution had changed the role of journalism in a free and democratic society, with the access to an accurate and independent source of news, and how would the public consume the news. With the digital revolution, producing and circulating information has made it easier for everyone to report and make news, which led to another major issue of how to regulate hostile and offensive material. “With technology, everyone can be a journalist by uploading a picture or video accompanied by text. Except it is difficult to justify whether it is a reliable source to maintaining consistent high-quality information,” said Professor Franks. She also discussed how the digital revolution threatens the economic model of mainstream media, particularly on advertising revenues, where the advertisement has migrated to the online website instead of print.



## “Optimism in the Past, Pessimism in the Future?”

by Dame Minouche Shafik, the Director of London School of Economics and Political Science

Why do we tend to glorify the past and look to the future with pessimism? In the 21st century, for the first time in human history, there are more people who died from eating too much than eating too little. More people commit suicide than all of those killed by war, crime and terrorism. Dame Minouche Shafik explored the causes of the rise of nostalgia politics and populism and links them to pressure on the social contract. She analysed how economic inequality, austerity, identity politics and fear of automatisisation, combined with media misrepresentation, cause uncertainty and pessimism for the future at a time when most economic, social and political indicators show that things are in fact getting better. “Malaysia, is an economic outperformer as the only one of seven countries in the world that is enjoying GDP growth above 3.5% for the past 50 years. This is quite an economic miracle,” said Dame Minouche.

## “How Quantum Mechanics Might Answer Life’s Biggest Questions”

by Professor Jim Al-Khalili, Surrey Distinguished Chair, Professor of Physics, and Chair in the Public Engagement in Science of University of Surrey

Quantum Mechanics is the most powerful and at the same time strangest theory in all of science. “Quantum Mechanics as developed in the 1920s really was because observations of the atomics and the subatomic world was suggesting that they did not obey the law. They obey very different laws of motion and the laws of behaviour,” said Professor Al-Khalili. It works hand in hand with physics and chemistry, and without it we would not have developed modern electronics. Today, an exciting new field of science is evolving, called quantum biology. Biologists have thus far got away without having to worry about this theory of the subatomic world, in which particles that behave like waves and atoms can be in two places at once. However, there is now strong evidence that many of the processes inside living cells would not be able to work without a helping hand from the quantum world. The subject is controversial yet hugely exciting. During the lecture, Professor Al-Khalili introduced this exciting new field and the researchers who are exploring it and asked whether we might even one day be able to explain the mystery of life itself using quantum mechanics. **B**



# SUNWAY UNIVERSITY GRADUATES BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW

The Sunway University Graduation Ceremony 2020 was a joyous celebration of over 900 students' completion of their significant education milestone.

Almost 2,000 including parents, staff, and guests were present to witness 643 graduates receiving their bachelor's degrees, 261 their diplomas, and 26 their masters and doctoral degrees.

Graduates were from the School of Hospitality, School of Arts, School of Healthcare and Medical Sciences, Sunway University Business School, School of Mathematical Sciences, and School of Science and Technology.

Unique this year, the School of Arts presented their first scrolls to the first cohort of the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Contemporary Music (Audio Technology) and Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Digital Film Production with a dual degree from Lancaster University.

Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr Jeffrey Cheah AO, Chancellor of Sunway University, shared in his congratulatory message to the graduates, "Education, in its fullest sense, is more than just words on a page. It is about the ideas in our minds, the passion in our hearts, the values in our lives, and the commitment in our characters."

Ng Li Ai, who completed a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Accounting and Finance with first-class honour, said she felt a sense of achievement.

"Through the interesting coursework, I got a chance to explore and express my opinion on the current issues in the industry, such as cryptocurrency and projects that the International Accounting Standards Board are working on," she said.

Ng is currently furthering her studies at Sunway TES as a full-time student, targeting to complete her Malaysian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (MICPA) professional qualification in three years.



Zoe Ooi Su Yin (left) and Ng Li Ai

The Chancellors Scholarship holder, Steven Soon Soo Onn from BA (Hons) Digital Film Production, who previously pioneered the School of Arts Representatives as the vice president, also shared his Sunway experience.

"Sunway University has always been a place that promotes the chasing of dreams. If there is one takeaway, it is to believe in myself and never be afraid to pursue my dreams – a value constantly encouraged by my lecturers during my time here."

Soon is now working for Flatfish Media as a director,

cinematographer, editor, and scriptwriter.

Ng and Soon are among the 30 graduates who received the Jeffrey Cheah Scholastic Award – an award to students who have accomplished outstanding results in their academic programme at Sunway University.

Valedictorian Zoe Ooi Su Yin remarked that graduation is a memorable occasion and quoted Malcolm X, the renowned human and civil

rights activist, "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."

Ooi continued, "Sunway's generous scholarship has helped me in preparing for tomorrow. I am sure to all of you as well, Sunway University has been more than just a place to study. It has been a place of raising confidence, emotional growth, and maturing in character."

Chan Sin Ling, also a Valedictorian, mentioned three important takeaways from Sunway University, "First,



Steven Soon Soo Onn (left) with Dr Elizabeth Lee at the graduation ceremony

step out of your comfort zone. Second, never stop learning. And lastly, share your knowledge." She is also a Jeffrey Cheah Scholastic Award recipient.

The graduating class of 2020 appreciate and thank all the parents, lecturers, friends, and to those who have encouraged, supported and inspired them in their journey.

To the graduating class of 2020, as Professor Simon Guy, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Global (Digital, International, Sustainability & Development) of Lancaster University had said, "This marks a new beginning as an alumnus of Lancaster University and Sunway."

"You are joining a community of tens of thousands of alumni from virtually every country in the world – a network that we hope will provide support, advice, and friendship throughout your lives!"



Chan Sin Ling

# FIRST YEAR HOSPITALITY STUDENTS RAISE FUNDS FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE

**Y**ear one semester two and three students from the BSc (Hons) in International Hospitality Management programme, School of Hospitality, organised charity dinners at Athnor at Sunway University.

The semester two students orchestrated a Trick and Treat Charity Dinner, which successfully raised RM3,500 for the non-profit organisation Make-A-Wish Malaysia.

Spearheading the Halloween themed dinner, with the appearance of Count Dracula and The Nun from the gothic horror novel and film, was General Manager Tan Jia Earn.

Tan led the team of 10 in organising their first event, which is also an assessment for the Intermediate Restaurant Operation module.

It was a learning process for everyone as Tan admitted that it was not easy being a leader, "There were mistakes made, and we need to learn from them to grow. I appreciate my team members for entrusting me with an important role, and for their efforts and the contributions they put in for the event."

Irene Teo, Chief Executive Officer of Make-A-Wish Malaysia, attended the dinner



Standing from left: Dr Daniel Chong, Tan Jia Earn and Irene Teo (4th) together with the team of Trick or Treat Charity Dinner



Irene Teo receiving the mock cheque from Professor Marcus Lee Stephenson, Dean of School of Hospitality (second from right)

and thanked the guests and students for their generous donation and effort.

"These children are mostly from families with limited income, and a lot of them may not live up to their teenage years. Some of them spend years at the hospital for surgeries and treatments and miss out on school. By granting them a wish, they are given a chance to decide what their heart-felt wishes are and slowly gain back their self-confidence," shared Teo.

The semester three students ran an Alice in Wonderland Charity Dinner, with Mad Hatter happily ushering guests to their seats.

Alexa Cheah, General Manager of the team, said, "We thought we wouldn't make it this far. However, we managed to pull through at the very last minute on ticket sales. We learned that teamwork and good communication are important

for a successful event."

The team of 13 successfully raised RM3,000 for Yayasan Generasi Gemilang – an organisation the team believed whose works align with Sunway University's values to nurture and build young Malaysians to reach their full potential.

"I had volunteered a couple of times in Yayasan Generasi Gemilang's reading programme for children and experienced first-hand what the organisation does for the community. We believe Yayasan Generasi Gemilang is doing an amazing job by being a stepping stone for many underprivileged children and families."

For Alexa, the important lesson through this event was to get everyone to work together, in particular, the international and local students.

"It was not about being the

one to call the shots, rather, to make sure that everyone felt inclusive in the decision-making process."

Representing Yayasan Generasi Gemilang at the dinner were Melissa Ngiam, Chief Operating Officer, and Liew Shu Ling, Section Head Communications.

Melissa thanked the students and highlighted that the funds would go into their basic needs funds utilised to provide breakfast and school uniforms for children from low-income families.

The assignment is given a small budget in which students are required to think of desirable profit margins with regards to the restaurant business, cash flow, and costs.

"It's hands-on learning by planning and organising an actual event to raise funds," explained Dr Daniel Chong Ka Leong, Senior Lecturer at the School of Hospitality, Sunway University.

He also added that his students were very happy to bless the organisation of their choices with the profits made from their events. **B**



From left: Dr Daniel Chong, Professor Marcus Stephenson, Dr Elizabeth Lee, Melissa Ngiam, Liew Shu Ling, and Alexa Cheah



VIPs and invited guests with the team behind Wonderland Charity Dinner

# A MAGICAL JOURNEY

(All photos courtesy of Acker Kwan)



*Amazement – the moment your eyes shine, your jaw unhinges, and the only word you could utter is “wow”. That is what Acker Kwan lives to create – to draw wonder within people through the power of magic.*

It took one trick from Anslem Roy, a veteran illusionist in Malaysia, to get then 15-year-old Acker hooked on magic. It was by a simple act of turning a piece of tissue into snow confetti!

The influence rubbed off on him easily, but the course the young aspiring magician undertook certainly was not so. Growing up in a religious family background, magic was perceived as the dark arts and witchcraft. So he studied magic in secret and often skipped meals to save up for magic props which he had to hide in fear of confiscation. The early days of freelance gigs also did not pay him well, so most of his services were for free in exchange for publicity.

Amid the uphill course, Acker's academic education revolved mainly in science; from pure science stream in secondary school to A-Levels to Medical Biotechnology at Sunway University. It is natural to assume that his passion for magic would cause his results to falter. On the contrary, he earned a scholarship and graduated with a 3.97 CGPA.

Even though the programme he undertook does not directly relate to his current profession, tertiary education has no doubt shaped him as a person. He believes that students who pursue higher education mature in critical thinking, team collaboration, and other life skills.

Upon graduation, Acker worked with the GrabFood operations team to fulfill his parent's wish for him to hold a full-time job. Four months into the job, he soon came to a crossroads – agreeing either to a promotion in GrabFood or an offer for a full-time position with MAD Entertainment. The latter is the company where he was previously engaged for his freelance magic performances. In the end, he chose magic as he had a nudge that it was what God wanted him to do.

Being a natural showman, his resignation was not merely written in an email or a letter.



He went the extra mile of narrating his magic calling and journey through an interesting presentation. With that, his bosses and colleagues at GrabFood expressed support towards his decision and even attended his shows.

Aker's family also finally acknowledged his passion and earnestness in magic when they watched him perform live at Sri Pentas. It was a tear-jerking moment when his parents told him they were proud of him and began to promote his show to his family and friends.

## Into The Enchanted World



**The noblest art is that of making others happy**

– P.T. Barnum

This quote is Aker's motto and what keeps him aligned in the entertainment industry. In Aker's words, "Without the heart for people, there can be no good magic because the audience does see the heart of the performer".

Together with MAD Entertainment, Aker and his fellow MADgicians aim to do more than just magic – they want to make a difference. Behind the hype of the performances is an attachment of inspirational messages that the audience can take away to reflect on life.

Magic has brought much confidence to Aker himself, developing him from his shy and introverted inclinations. But till today, Aker still gets nervous before stage performances. He took a month to prepare for the Anugerah Skrin at Sri Pentas!

Pre-show music helps calm his nerves and his favourite soundtrack is, "Is this real life? Is this just fantasy?" from Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen. Music has been his catalyst in his practice of magic in the wee hours. He even combined both his interest for magic and music in producing one of his signature tricks called "Card Music Wonder".

Aker's next big goal is to kickstart his own show. The show is expected to merge storytelling, singing and possibly dancing, all inspired from his personal life story.

We wish Aker all the best and look forward to catching his live shows!

*Do you also have an alumni story to share? Reach out to the Sunway Alumni Relations team via [alumni@sunway.edu.my](mailto:alumni@sunway.edu.my) as we would love to hear from you!*



Aker Kwan gets his magic up-close and personal with his spectators



# ADELYNE TI TENG NEE

## BSC (HONS) IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

*Associate Consultant, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)*

In 2015, I started my degree at Sunway University and became one of the Microsoft Student Partners (MSP). I enjoyed meeting new friends from different countries who are like family to me. Together, we collaborated with a social enterprise by conducting a workshop to spread Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education to kids!

I always pictured the Computer Science career as long hours of coding in front of my machine. That is a bummer because I love socialising and I also love IT. I never imagined that I would now be working in one of the Big Four accounting firms, doing IT and communicating with various people!

My work mainly involved in IT audit, cybersecurity controls and penetration testing. Through Sunway, I have built a strong foundation of knowledge that has made it easier for me to transition into my job.

For students in Sunway, things will not get easier but remain tough and stay grounded. Also, appreciate your lecturers because I would not be where I am if not for their hard work!

# STEVEN SOON SOO ONN

## BA (HONS) DIGITAL FILM PRODUCTION

*Director and Videographer, Flatfish Media Sdn Bhd*

A freelancer before my undergraduate studies, I contemplated between the pathways to enter into the film industry at once or to pursue a three-year degree programme. My concern was losing three years of valuable industry experience, but the Chancellors Scholarship, which has my tuition fees fully covered, supported my decision to take the leap of faith.

In hindsight, I am really glad I made this choice. At Sunway University, I was mentored by experienced and dedicated lecturers. Because of them, my assignments were official selections in film festivals locally and internationally; "From Home With Love" was nominated as Best Short Film at both Cinemà Cinemà International Short Film Festival 2018, Italy and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) 14th Mini Film Festival; "Hang In There, Gentleman" was nominated for Best Documentary at UNIMAS 14th Mini Film Festival.

For someone who detests theory, my lecturers changed my perspective and I fell in love with research and theoretical studies including psychology, history and culture. This benefits me as a filmmaker because filmmaking goes beyond the technicalities.

The programme has indeed given me a head-start and edge in my profession as a full-time industry practitioner. Currently, with Flatfish Media, we are a start-up that has a focus on youth empowerment and alleviation of social issues. One of the projects introduces a documentary series that follows the efforts of suicide prevention in Malaysia.





## LEOW YEE TING

### DIPLOMA IN EVENT MANAGEMENT

*Personal Assistant to CEO, Getha*

Without a doubt, Sunway University provides quality education. The in-depth understanding I gained through my programme exposed me to further opportunities. The programme then led me to continue my Bachelor's Degree in Event Management at the University of West London.

After five years of working, people expect me to reach the managerial level. However, being a personal assistant has its perks. I enjoy taking on several projects from small festive events to large business expansions.

I am privileged to have had previous experiences working in Genting Berhad, IOI Corporation, and now Getha. I am proud to be working for a Malaysian brand.

My advice to students is to stay positive and be your own sunshine because you can overcome anything with an open mind. Last but not least, be adventurous to face challenges so that you realise how strong you are.

I was an American Degree Transfer Programme student at Sunway University before my transfer to Western Michigan University. During my two years in Sunway, I was a member of the Centre for American Education Student Committee.

As an active student leader, I was involved in project management and picked up skills like stakeholder engagement. This benefited my goal to run my own social enterprise.

Throughout my studies, I followed the career landscape so that I would know how to leverage my strengths. The community that I built in Sunway (with Dr Malissa and Ms Yati in particular) was also instrumental in pushing me to grow beyond my comfort zone.

Since joining the workforce, I co-founded #Undi18. We are a non-partisan organisation that actively engages with politicians on all sides of the political divide to promote a youth-centric agenda and democratic reforms.

Last July, the Malaysian Parliament and Senate agreed to amend the Malaysian Constitution to lower the voting age from 21 to 18! This puts Malaysian youth as 40% of the voting bloc in the next general election with millions more added into the electoral roll. It will truly be an exciting time for our country for the next few years.

We have partnered with various ministries including the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Defence, and research organisations like the Jeffrey Cheah Institute of Southeast Asia. I currently manage the voter education and youth engagement programmes for the organisation as well as consult on campaigns and programmes.

My advice to juniors is to take up as many different roles as possible during your time as a student. These will provide you with out-of-the-classroom skills.

## QYIRA YUSRI

### AMERICAN DEGREE TRANSFER PROGRAM

*Co-founder & Programme Director of #UNDI18*



# Bachelor of Business Analytics (Hons)

JPT/BPP(U)(N/345/6/1099/PA11422)04/24

*Business analytics, most used in the world's major companies, is a data-driven approach in the world of business using statistics and data modelling to develop new business insights. With the use of data analysis and business intelligence tools, businesses are analysed to predict future performances so that business decisions can be made accordingly.*

The Bachelor of Business Analytics (Honours) provides students with the knowledge and applied skills in big data processing to effectively deal with the rapidly emerging field of business analytics. A comprehensive programme designed to incorporate three essential domains; business analytics, information technology and general business administration.

Using business analytics tools and techniques, students will be able to develop critical thinking and analytical skills to process big data for problem solving and

decision making. This programme equips students with the ability to transform data into powerful and predictive insights to respond to the global big data revolution. The programme is well-balanced and comprehensive by offering various subjects in IT and business analytics in addition to a full range of business core subjects.

At the culmination of the programme, a capstone project will be done to allow

students to explore at length and in detail the practical application of business analytics theories while simultaneously integrating problem solving skills to real-world business analytics projects.

This degree is validated by Lancaster University and upon the successful completion of the programme, graduates are awarded two scrolls; one from Sunway University and another from Lancaster University.

*As smart technologies disrupt most if not all industries, 75 million existing roles may decline by 2022. Whilst, it is projected that 133 million new roles related to data science and artificial intelligence will emerge.*

*The Future of Jobs Report 2018, World Economic Forum*

